

Hodge H. G. & F. L.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

TO THE

COURSE ON OBSTETRICS

AND

DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

DELIVERED IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

NOVEMBER 5, 1846.

BY

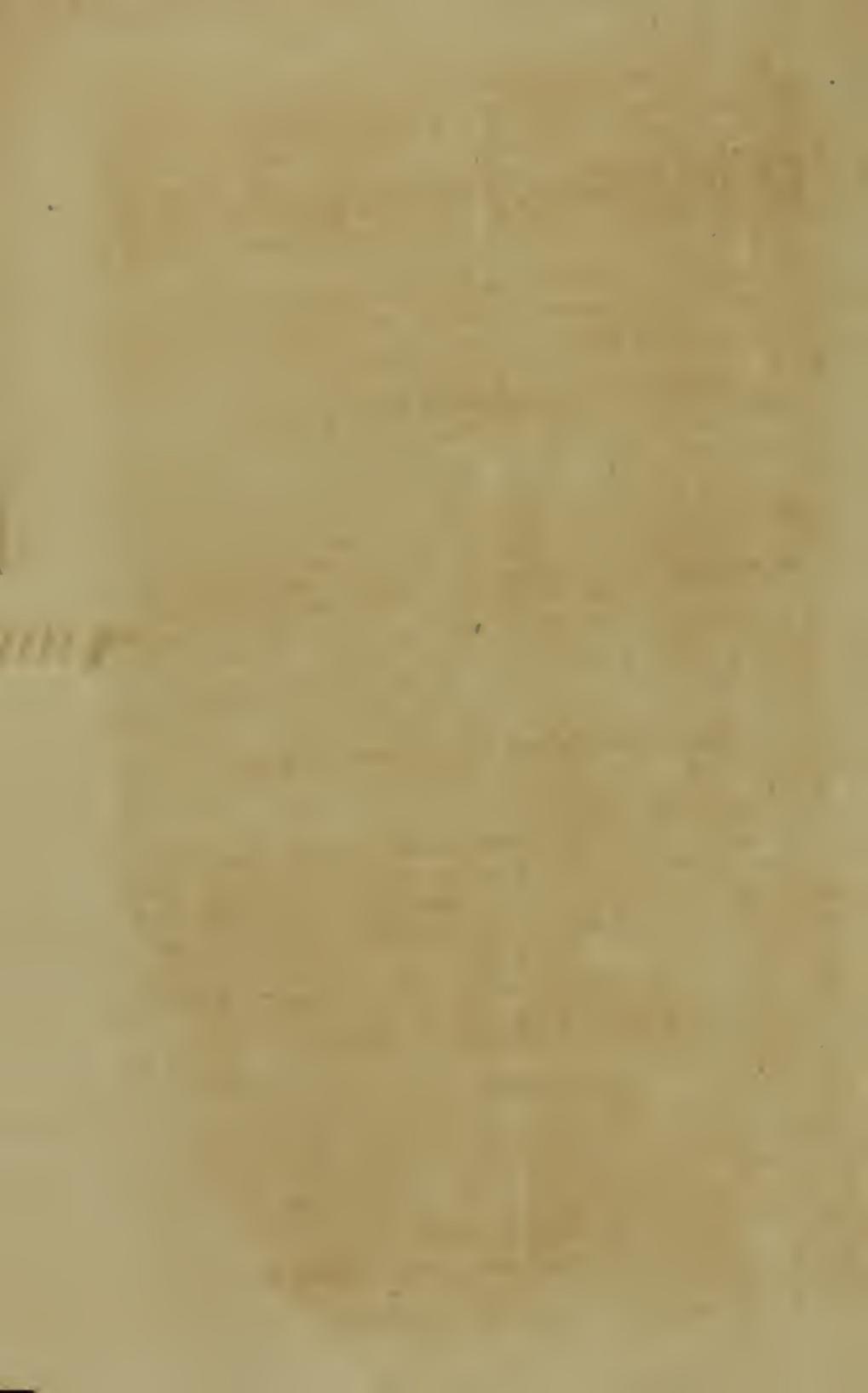
HUGH L. HODGE, M. D.



Philadelphia:

WILLIAM S. YOUNG, PRINTER,—50 N. SIXTH STREET.

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PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 12th, 1846.

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting held last evening in the Amphitheatre, by the Medical Class, it was

"Resolved, That a committee be appointed to wait upon DR. HUGH L. HODGE, and to express to him the thanks of the Class for his able and eloquent Introductory Address, and that a copy be requested for publication."

Allow us, sir, in communicating the above resolution, to add our personal solicitations to that of the class, and hope that you will comply with the request.

Yours, very respectfully,

JOHN HOWLETT, Va., *Chairman.*

GEORGE L. POTTER, Penn., *Secretary.*

C O M M I T T E E .

John L. Williamson, N. C.
Uriah Q. Davis, Penn'a.
Simon Turner, Tenn.
John F. Allen, Mo.
William H. Holcombe, Ia.
James G. Dell, Florida.
Amos Sharp, Nova Scotia.

Charles F. Percival, Md.
Robert D. Ross, Cherokee Nation.
Nathaniel Miller, R. I.
A. H. Frierson, S. Carolina.
Edmund Janvier, N. Jersey.
Lewis Burwell, Virginia.

To DR. HUGH L. HODGE.

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 13th, 1846.

GENTLEMEN,—Gratified by the resolution of the Medical Class, which has been so politely communicated by you, their Committee, I comply with their request, hoping that the importance of the subject will excuse the publication of an address which I am aware is imperfect in its details, and not sufficiently elaborate.

With many thanks for your politeness, believe me, gentlemen,

Yours, most respectfully,

HUGH L. HODGE.

C O M M I T T E E .

John Howlett, Va., *Chairman.*
George L. Potter, *Secretary.*
John L. Williamson, N. C.
Uriah Q. Davis, Penn'a.
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Lewis Burwell, Virginia.
Edmund Janvier, N. J.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL CLASS,—I appear before you as the representative of the Obstetric department of this University. In this capacity, I must teach you the science and the practice of Obstetrics, or, as it has been well named, Tokology. It constitutes that division of the medical profession which takes cognizance of those wonderful phenomena which occur in the female system from the moment of conception to the full period of utero-gestation; which examines, with scientific accuracy, the minute and varied changes which occur during labour, ascertains what are the fundamental laws which regulate this important process, and studies every deviation from the natural course of parturition. From these sources are deduced those principles which render our science so eminently useful—so important to the welfare of the community.

That I may teach, and that you may learn this science, the first and the greatest desideratum is to form right conceptions of the nature and importance of the Obstetric art; that, being fully persuaded of its great—I had almost said its inestimable value—we may devote to its culture every talent we possess, with a zeal and a perseverance, which will overcome every obstacle and defy every opposition.

On former occasions, when I had the honour of introducing this subject to a medical class, I felt so deeply the importance of forming correct and elevated notions of our science, that I cheerfully embraced the opportunity to explain the true character of Tokology, and, by various considerations, to urge its claims on the time and thoughts of a medical student. It was then demonstrated that this branch of medicine truly deserved the name of a science; that it was not merely an art—a fortuitous collection of facts, to be learned merely by observation and experience; but that it was founded on the peculiar structure and functions of the female system: of course demanding, as a preliminary study, a knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

Moreover, it was shown that it was involved so intimately with the other branches of medicine, that no man can be a good obstetrician who is not a good physician. All the sciences, a knowledge of which

ready immediately to provide a dinner for her lord, or to follow him through the prairie or the forest.

Such, it is reported, is parturition in savage life. And even in civilized communities, how few females, it is contended, receive more than the simplest attentions; and how few accidents ensue. Why, then, it is triumphantly asked, should we not leave this process to unassisted nature? Why spend time, and labour, and money in the acquisition of knowledge of so little value; which places its possessor on no superior eminence—which renders the scientific accoucheur no more useful than an ignorant midwife?

Language, somewhat similar, is occasionally heard even from physicians of some reputation. They acknowledge, it is true, that some information is requisite; that a midwife should have some idea of anatomy, and physiology; should know that there is some difference between a male and female pelvis; that the foetus ought to present its head in favourable labours, and that occasionally difficulties do occur. But they maintain that no very peculiar attention is demanded,—that any physician is sufficiently prepared,—that the employment of medical means,—bleeding, cathartics, opiates, &c., &c.,—are usually sufficient, especially when conjoined with patience,—the sovereign panacea with them for the pains, anxieties, and dangers of parturient females. Wait *patiently* and all will be right: nature is powerful,—every difficulty will vanish,—and, in time, the child will be born.

They say, too much midwifery is taught—too much is done for the parturient female; that more evil than good results from manual and instrumental assistance, and, that it is a question whether the obstetric art has not slain more than it has preserved. They appeal, in confirmation of these vague assertions, to the truly horrible cases of malpractice in midwifery, and detail, triumphantly, the injuries sustained by the unhappy mother, and the fatality which has often ensued to the child, and frequently even to its parent.

Such are the most important objections which have been urged by the popular or professional voice against the science of obstetrics. They have been presented from time immemorial, and have always had, and perhaps always will have, an influence. As, however, civilization advances,—as the darkness of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition yield before the rising lights of literature, science, and religion,—these objections become easily understood, and are easily overthrown. Experience, the true teacher, the accurate discriminator between the true and the false, bears universal testimony to the value of our art. Wherever civilization appears,—wherever female sufferings excite sympathy, and the life of woman is deemed important,—more or less attention is paid to her during the progress of gestation and parturition.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed that, notwithstanding all that has lately been accomplished, the scientific study and practice of obstetrics is lamentably deficient, even in civilized countries. The assertions which we have recited, so derogatory to midwifery, still have too much influence. It is imagined, too generally, that the practice is easy, that few attentions are demanded, and that these can be usually paid by ignorant females; that, in cases of emergency, physicians may be con-

sulted, but even then no great knowledge is demanded, or any peculiar art or experience required. Hence we find that few, very few physicians, even in our populous cities, have become skilled in the science of obstetrics: many practise it simply as an art, and are miserably prepared for the difficulties which must be encountered—difficulties which always involve much suffering, and often the life of the child and its parent,—the responsibility of which must then bear very heavily on the feelings and conscience of the ignorant practitioner of the art.

If such be the case in populous cities, where there is every facility for study, and every opportunity for practical improvement; where the prejudice which is so natural, and, it may be added, so honourable to females, respecting the employment of the male sex in their accouchements, has been fully overcome; you may easily imagine how lamentably defective must be the condition of our science among the villages, towns, and districts of our extended country. How much suffering exists among the parturient females of our country which might be alleviated; how many dangers are they exposed to which might be avoided; how many actual, unavoidable, difficulties—many of them having a fatal issue, which might be removed, did but the bright light of obstetric science illuminate the mind, and direct the hand of the practising obstetrician.

Facts, too well substantiated, demonstrate that this is no vain supposition. I have little doubt, that young as you are in the profession, you have heard, and perhaps have been witnesses, of scenes of distress, and even of death, arising from ignorance or quackery, sufficient to convince you of the necessity of improving the practice of obstetrics in these United States, of wresting this branch of the profession from the hands of ignorance and empiricism, and of committing it, (and of course, with it, the best interests of women and society,) to the hands of well-instructed accoucheurs.

On this subject, gentlemen, I am much interested. Fully sensible, I would hope, of the importance of the station I here occupy, I feel deeply that there are duties involved with it much more extensive and enduring, than simply to teach you the principles of obstetrics. Any information which you may here gain, and any influence which I may exert over your opinions and conduct, should be exercised for the benefit of the whole community with which we are connected; yea of generations yet unborn, which are rapidly succeeding each other, and whose interests, as already shown, are intimately involved in the practice of midwifery.

A great object, therefore, of my ambition is, not only to indoctrinate you with true scientific principles, on this subject, but to assist, through your instrumentality, in revolutionizing the opinions and practice of the inhabitants of our country—to open their eyes to the importance of our art; to convince them that, in all cases of labour, even the most natural and favourable, pain and anxiety can be alleviated; that dangers and difficulties can be avoided; and that, when unavoidable accidents or difficulties occur, they can always be ameliorated, and very often overcome; and frequently, in cases of labour, absolutely impracticable, by all the efforts and resources of nature, that our science appears

as an angel of mercy from the heavens—as the favoured instrument in her hands of a benevolent and beneficent Providence, to accomplish this otherwise impracticable work—to preserve the life of a wife and a mother, and, in many instances, to save even the innocent cause of all these anxieties and sufferings.

In prosecution of this design, permit me during the remainder of this address, to demonstrate that the various objections which we have presented as derogatory to our science, are without foundation; that granting, as we fully do, that parturition is a natural process, and that in a majority of cases, nature unassisted can effect a safe and often an easy delivery; yet, that there are peculiarities in the human female which render parturition necessarily more difficult, painful and dangerous than among the lower order of animals; that as civilization and refinement advance this important process becomes more complicated and dangerous; that these complications occur frequently, always aggravating the suffering of our patients, often increasing the difficulties, and in many instances appearing so unexpectedly and suddenly, that the life or death of two interesting individuals hang on the decisions of a moment: that there are labours so difficult, so impracticable, that both mother and child will unavoidably perish without the resources which our art can alone furnish.

It has been already granted that parturition is a natural process, and that, in a majority of cases, it is accomplished, without assistance, in safety to the mother and her infant. In one respect, it differs, however, from other natural and healthy processes of the economy—it is always attended with feelings of distress and anxiety, and almost universally with pain of a most trying and severe character. While other functions, in their exercise, are agreeable, and afford a pleasant excitement, that of the uterus and its assistants, during the process of parturition, depresses the moral and mental energies of the female, excites the most intense suffering, and interferes with the healthful play of other organs, sometimes to a dangerous and fatal extent. The inferior order of animals apparently suffer in a similar manner, but certainly not to the same extent. Woman suffers, and no doubt, always will suffer under the primeval curse, which, while it doomed man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, solemnly declared, as regards his frail companion, that “in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” Although it is not for us, as philosophers, to consider the moral bearings of the distinction thus drawn between the human and the brute female, so much to the disadvantage of the former,—yet we can point out certain anatomical arrangements and certain physiological states, which prove, that parturition must necessarily be more laborious and more painful in the human female.

In quadrupeds, it is found that the axis of the pelvis corresponds, in most cases, nearly or exactly, to the axis of the body: that during delivery, therefore, of the pregnant female, the foetus passes in a straight line from the cavity of the uterus, through the apertures of the pelvis, meeting with little resistance from impinging against the bones of the sacrum and coccyx. These apertures, also, are usually larger in proportion, owing to the moveable condition of the caudal extremity of the spine, and perhaps to the greater proportional separation of the rami of the

pubes. The erect portion of the human female, "vultus ad sidera," deprives her of these advantages. If with her, the axis of the pelvis corresponded to that of the body, and of course, if the apertures or openings of the pelvis were directly opposed, parallel to those of the abdomen, great uneasiness and distress would necessarily result from the pressure of the superincumbent viscera on those of the pelvis: the bladder, the uterus and the rectum, would receive the direct weight of the abdominal contents, and be necessarily disturbed in their functions, and no doubt constantly displaced. Prolapsus uteri would be a universal disease, with all its distressing symptoms. To prevent these evils, the pelvis in the human race is oblique, its apertures and axis do not correspond to those of the body—and hence only an indirect or lateral pressure is made on its contents by the viscera of the abdomen, so that few inconveniences comparatively ensue. Nevertheless, human females are liable, from this cause, to displacements of the uterus and other organs, and to many symptoms of a severe character to which the lower order of animals, from their prone condition, are not exposed. It is, however, during the parturient process, that this obliquity of the pelvis produces the most serious difficulties. The foetus, in its descent, continually impinges on the walls of the pelvis; its direct course is impeded; it is obliged to describe a curved line in its passage, and of course, the uterine powers are partially exhausted on the sides of the cavity in forcing the foetus in this tortuous direction. Hence more power comparatively is demanded: and as this power is resident chiefly in the muscular fibres of the uterus, and as the contractions of these fibres excite painful sensations, we perceive at once, why there is not only more mechanical difficulty, but more suffering in the human female, than in the brute during the parturient efforts.

There is another fact, which augments this difficulty and suffering in the human species; it is the comparatively large size of the foetal head. When you shall hereafter examine the head and body of a new-born infant, you will be surprised that they could possibly descend through the openings of the pelvis and vagina: and your surprise will not be dissipated until you study the mechanism of labour and learn how wonderfully Providence has adapted the means to the end. Still from this cause, the comparative difficulty, suffering and danger in the human species is materially enhanced.

These facts are strengthened by another physiological phenomenon of great importance which has been strangely overlooked in all the assertions and arguments which have been employed on this subject. I allude to the comparative irritability and sensibility of the superior and lower order of animals. It is not true, that the reptile when crushed by the foot of the traveller,

"Feels a pang as great as when a giant dies."

It requires no laboured argument and no great array of facts, to show that as we ascend in the scale of animated nature, irritability and sensibility are more and more developed. Plants have irritability, but no sensibility. The mollusca and vermes manifest very faint signs of sensibility. This property is more evident in the superior classes of the cold-blooded animals, but is still trifling when compared with the

sensitiveness manifested in those whose respiratory organs are well developed, and, through whose vessels flows the warm blood which seems to give animation and activity to every organ, and to arouse the dormant sensibilities of the tissues. Who, for a moment, can compare the sensibilities,—susceptibilities of the brute creation, with those of the human species? who, that has any experience whatever in observing the healthy and diseased operations of the human body—that wonderful instrument whose chords are so delicate, so vibratory, that even the least impulse radiates through the whole system,—can imagine that impressions made on this being are not more powerful—more influential, than when made on the beasts of the earth? If this be true of the race in general—how true of woman! who seems to be all sensibility—all nerve—the most refined, the most susceptible of all terrestrial beings. The human female, therefore, during parturition, suffers in common with the females of other animals, from the contractions of the uterus and the mechanical resistances to the progress of the fetus; but her sufferings are more intense from the tortuous course of the pelvic canal; from the disproportion between the size of the pelvis and that of the child; and especially from the far greater susceptibility of her system, in consequence of which every irritation produces a more powerful effect, and, in many instances, prostrates all her vital energies.

The argument, however, does not stop here; we have not yet alluded to the distinguishing characteristic difference between man and the brute, viz., to the mind or spirit,—or as the French express it,—to the “morale,” including under these expressions, all the various sentiments, passions and affections which constitute man an intellectual and moral being. This is not the time nor the place, even if the ability existed, to trace the influences of mind on matter; to present the wonderful actions and reactions which are ever occurring between the mind and the body; to point out their mutual dependence, while we maintain their distinct natures, and to exhibit, how the natural healthy functions of the body are under the controlling influences of the mind through the medium of the brain; its immediate instrumental agent. Suffice it for us to observe, that a connexion does exist of the most intricate and mysterious character, productive of the most wonderful and inexplicable results, between the spirit and this corporeal system of nerves and vessels; and that in no function of the animal economy is this sympathy more decidedly manifested for good or for evil, than in that of the uterus during parturition. You will hereafter learn how frequently, labour is brought on by voluntary or involuntary affections of the mind; how singularly by these moral changes, this process is accelerated or retarded; and what dangerous complications from hemorrhage—spasms—convulsion, &c., are too frequently induced by sudden impressions on the mind and feelings of the patient. From all these sources of danger, of difficulty, and of suffering, the unthinking, unfeeling brute is exempted; for it anticipates no danger, magnifies no sensation, apprehends no evil, but submits to present impressions and sufferings, totally regardless of the past or the future.

How futile then, gentlemen, how absurd, to draw an argument

against the science and practice of obstetrics, as regards the human female, from the comparative easy parturition among the lower order of animals. The absurdity is the more glaring, when it is known that all their labours are not easy or natural; that with them difficulties occur from malposition of the foetus, from want of power, from inflammation, &c., by which the lives of the mother and offspring are not only endangered but very often destroyed. They themselves need the aid of science and skill; and it is to be hoped, that the example which benevolence and an enlightened self-interest have presented in older countries, of applying the principles of our art to the management of difficult labours among cattle, will soon be followed in our own country, where there is every inducement to afford them attention and assistance.

Moreover, for reasons somewhat analogous, we maintain, that no argument can be sustained against the value of our science, because the process of parturition among savages and among the poor and laborious classes of society is often easy and rapid, with little risk to the mother or her offspring. We can only, in such cases, admire the wisdom and goodness of Providence, who has not only admirably prepared the structure and the functions of the organs for the accomplishment of this all-important process; but who thus teaches us that those females who live most temperately, most in the open air, and most in accordance with natural laws are the most favoured in the process of child-birth. They have more strength, more capacity of enduring suffering, more power to assist the uterine efforts, while the various stages of labour, the necessary secretions, and relaxations succeed each other in the most natural and appropriate manner.

All this is true. Nevertheless, the statement is equally true, that difficulties and dangers have occurred, in the process of child-birth, among all people and all nations, in all ages of the world, and in every rank and condition of life. In the earliest history of the human race, we have occasional notices of difficult parturition, and of the existence of midwifery as a distinct business or profession. You all doubtless remember, that Rachel, the wife of Jacob, died in labour with her second child, and that she was assisted by a midwife. The simple record in Genesis, c. xxxv., v. 16, 17, 18, and 19 is, that "Rachel travailed and she had hard labour: and it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also: and it came to pass that as her soul was in departing (for she died,) that she called his name Ben-oni;" the child of my sorrow—showing that difficult labour did occur, and this so frequently, that regular and, to a certain extent, instructed assistants were procured for the parturient female at this early period of the world, and when the customs of society were exceedingly simple. Midwives are again alluded to in the 1st chapter of Exodus, v. 15, &c., where the intimation is given that difficult labours were common among the ancient Egyptians, and demanded peculiar assistance. The whole history of medicine and of our branch in particular, confirms this statement, and we know in modern times, that among the most wild and savage people, frequently are

children lost in the birth, and often do the mothers fall victims to the difficulties and accidents to which they are necessarily exposed.

Did, therefore, our science have for its object the preservation of the mother or infant only in extraordinary cases; there can be no doubt that the history of parturition would demand its sedulous cultivation. This demand is still more imperious, when it is recollectcd that obstetrics not only furnishes assistance in extraordinary cases, but that in all and every case of labour it does good, at least, by preventing mischief, and generally, by efficient aid, in lessening pain or diminishing the period of suffering.

But again. We contend that the process of parturition becomes more difficult and dangerous as civilization and luxury increase; and hence, that in the more refined and cultivated states of society, there is a more imperious necessity that the principles of Tokology should be well understood, and carefully and constantly reduced to practice. Time will not permit us to enter fully into this subject, which involves the consideration of all those influences which civilized life exerts over the human system. Suffice it to observe, that those influences are very numerous; and extend to the mind and heart in a very important degree, as well as to the body. On comparing civilized with savage life, in a physiological and medical point of view, an entire change of circumstances, mode of living, habits, education, pursuits, objects of business, of interest, of affection, is immediately observed. Of course, corresponding changes are effected in that most susceptible of all susceptible beings—the human system. In general, it may be observed, that there is a great diminution of nervous energy and of vital force and strength; while the whole system, nervous and vascular, becomes far more irritable—more susceptible of injurious influences and morbid actions.

Upon the supposition, therefore, that the process of delivery is precisely the same in savage and in civilized life—requiring, in either case, that the foetus should be expelled by powerful contractions of the uterus, assisted by similar efforts from the abdominal muscles, diaphragm, and other accessory powers, in opposition to the resistances from the bones of the pelvis and the soft parts—we find that the laborious, muscular, and vigorous inhabitant of the forest brings to this work a power and an energy which seems to mock at every resistance; while, owing to her excellent physiological condition, the secretions are so abundant that relaxation of the soft parts readily occurs, diminishing materially the amount of resistances. In her case, also, notwithstanding the violent and long-continued throes of labour, she is comparatively little exhausted by these muscular efforts, and the attendant disorders of her nervous and circulatory systems; but, in a short time—a few hours, (it may be, in a few minutes,)—can resume the ordinary duties of her station. Owing to the same vigour of system, there is less irritability, of course, less disposition to subsequent pain, spasms, inflammation, and fever, than would otherwise exist. The critical secretion from the mammae occurs readily and abundantly, without pain or fever; and, while it affords an exhaustless and healthy

nourishment to her new-born infant, would seem to prevent or counteract every injurious or morbid tendency in the system.

How different with the daughter of civilization, who has been nursed and educated in comparative indolence and luxury; who has hardly ever felt the frosts of winter, or been subjected to the heats of summer; who knows not, by experience, what it is to labour, and has hardly ever, perhaps, known even the exhaustion of active exercise. Her muscular system is undeveloped, and, of course, possesses but a modicum of vital energy; while her nervous and vascular systems are morbidly irritable, liable to disturbance on the slightest occasions, and from the most trifling irritations. Her labour at the appointed hour commences, but is often protracted through inertia, or even exhaustion of the uterus, and the want of efficiency and energy in the contraction of the abdominal muscles; or it is complicated with hemorrhage, spasms, convulsions—with inflammation, fever, or positive exhaustion, from the morbid irritability of her system. For similar reasons she is more prone to all the variety of nervous and inflammatory diseases which not unfrequently supervene on the process of parturition, and has less strength to support their deleterious influences: and, in the most favourable cases, there is a degree of fatigue and exhaustion following the violent efforts of labour, which require days, and even weeks, that the delicate and nervous parent may recover.

It would be easy to go more into detail on these points, were it requisite, and to point out a larger number of inconveniences and dangers resulting from the deficiency of muscular vigour, and from the morbid irritability which is often met with in the female who has enjoyed all the advantages of the moral and intellectual culture of modern and refined society, but who suffers in her physical system by departing from the simple, temperate, although laborious, habits of a primitive state of existence.

Considering thus purely the physical or corporeal system, it would appear that the advance of refinement—the improved state of society, as it is usually termed—instead of diminishing, actually augments the difficulties and dangers of parturition: but in our department of medicine, gentlemen, we are never to forget the influence of the moral and intellectual powers over the functions of the body. We have already pointed out the important difference which this spiritual influence creates between human and comparative parturition. The difference between the brute, that perishes, and woman in savage life, as regards mental and moral developments, is, perhaps, not more conspicuous than that which is instantaneously perceived and felt between the poor, degraded, miserable Hottentot, or an Indian squaw, and the delicate, polished, refined, cultivated lady, whose mental and moral powers have been developed by all that varied attention and culture which literature, science, and religion, in modern times, can bestow, and whose polished manners and conversation are but the indices of a mind and heart alive to every noble, elevated, and generous sentiment.

Hereafter, when fully engaged in the practice of your profession, you will understand and feel the force of this argument better than you can at present. You will then learn how all the circumstances of preg-

nancy and parturition are modified, and often deranged, by the agitations of the mind and heart; how, after delivery, mental and moral disturbances induce serious, and even dangerous accidents; how they render an irritable system still more irritable, or diminish the recuperative powers, so that convalescence is tedious; or it may be, that from this cause, a fatal termination may ensue. You will then understand how necessary it is for the accoucheur, that his own intellectual and moral character should be suitably cultivated, that he may "minister to a mind diseased;" that, by a moral government of his patient, he may elude these various sources of mischief and danger, or at least modify or restrain their influences, that good, not evil, may ensue to his most delicate, but, at the same time, most interesting patient.

It was my intention to have pursued this subject, and to have pointed out, in a summary manner, some of the most prominent complications of labour which render this process difficult, dangerous, and not unfrequently impracticable and fatal, without artificial assistance; to have shown that these complications are unavoidable—that they must and will occur—and that some of them occur frequently; and hence to make the necessary, the unavoidable inference, that the process of natural labour should be carefully studied, that such complications may be readily detected, and that means should be devised to obviate or remove them: in other words, that the art and the science of obstetrics—its theory and practice—are essential to the comfort, the happiness, the health and lives of females and their infants, and should therefore be studied and improved wherever females are beloved and honoured—wherever the best interests of women and children, and hence of society, are duly appreciated.

It was my intention, also, to have proved that a common knowledge of the medical profession was not sufficient to make an obstetrician; that much peculiar knowledge is demanded, and much practical experience in this department, that the power of diagnosis may be acquired, and suitable relief be extended to the suffering female, and to her endangered although stupified offspring.

I wished, also, to have shown that too much midwifery cannot be learned, and, of course, cannot be taught; that the evils and the mischiefs caused by mal-practice have resulted from the deficiency, not from the superabundance of obstetric knowledge and experience; and that the science of obstetrics is not accountable for the horrible catastrophes which have too frequently ensued from neglecting to afford the requisite assistance at the proper time, or from ignorant pretenders to the art—or, it may be, from regular and respectable physicians, untutored, however, in our science, attempting the intricate and difficult operations of tokology.

Time, however, will not permit us to continue these observations; and surely it is not necessary. Enough certainly has been said to vindicate our science from the aspersions of ignorance; to show that no argument can be drawn from analogy, as regards parturition among the lower animals, among savages, or among the healthy and laborious classes of society, against the practical utility of obstetrics; that the abuses and mal-practice of empirics or half-educated obstetricians can-

not be urged against the judicious and scientific employment of those remedial measures and those well-adapted operations which, while they exalt our science, render it an inestimable blessing. You certainly will suitably appreciate the importance and dignity of obstetrics; you will be prepared to cultivate with assiduity its fundamental principles, to practise it successfully, to urge its importance on others, and to employ all your influence now, and more especially hereafter, to elevate this branch of the profession in the estimation of the community, and to extend far and wide its beneficial influence, that present and future generations may reap the benefits of your talents and studies, and be blessed through your instrumentality.

T H E E N D

